

## Despair and Hope--Chapter Ten

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All Feedback appreciated!

This is the last chapter I have written as of 4/17/00. As soon as I have other chapters I'll post them. Thanks for your patience.~~~Kari ; -)

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Rose spoke not a single word during the entire car ride to the station.

Neither did Cal.

She could feel his intense gaze glaring into the back of her head as she gazed out the window, watching her new home recede into the distance.

Silently, he dared her to speak; dared her to speak one witty remark. Still, she said nothing. She could not think clearly, much less utter an intelligible sound.

Rose was in a shock almost greater than she had been during the first few days after the sinking. She closed her eyes, trying not to picture the torn look on Jack's face. She tried to think of anything that would keep her mind off of him.

The only sound in the vehicle was that of her breathing and her pounding heart. What was to become of her, she pondered silently? Was she to be re-introduced into society? What of her child? She could

not imagine a man like Caledon Hockley bringing up the offspring of another man--much less the offspring of a "gutter rat."

The possible fate of her unborn child sent chills up her spine. I won't let them take you away, she promised silently to the tiny life inside of her as she rubbed her belly gently. I'll be damned if I let them take away the life Jack and I created together. Her last link to Jack . . .

Somehow, she swore, she would once again get away from Caledon Hockley. She and Jacklynn would get away together.

\* \* \*

The Renault came to a stop with a slight shudder. Rose waited for what would inevitably happen to just happen and be over with.. The silence was deafening as she felt Cal's lingering glare on the back of her head.

"Rose, look at me." The anger in his upper-class voice was barely contained.

She did not comply, choosing to instead keep her eyes transfixed on the low roof of the train station.

Suddenly, she was blinded by a white-hot pain as stars exploded in her eyes, and her head was yanked in Cal's direction by the roots of her hair. She cried out shortly, bringing her fingers up to wrestle her hair out of Cal's grip.

"When I tell you to look at me, I mean look at me. You will do exactly as I say the moment I say it. Is this in any way unclear?"

Cal's face was bright red, his anger ready to explode to the surface at any given moment. She had seen him angry before, but not like this. Even when he had chased her through the lower decks of the sinking Titanic wielding a gun and firing recklessly like a madman, she had not been so frightened.

She did not know Cal all that well after all. She was unsure of what he was capable of.

In response to his question, all she could do was nod fearfully. Rebelling right here like this would get her nothing but hurt.

"Good." He smiled at her now--his disgustingly fake smile that chilled her and angered her all at once. "When we get out of this car, you will enter the train quietly. You will stay right beside me and speak to no one. Do you understand?"

She nodded.

"Good." He smiled at her again. "I do love you, Rose, despite your betrayal. You're young, and you made a mistake in judgment. I can forgive you for that. Just don't ever disobey me again."

His words seemed to chill her more than his threats. Her only response was to look at him in growing horror as her hope for a

future like the one she promised Jack she would have faded before her eyes.

As soon as she had exited the car, Cal was next to her, latching onto her arm tightly to be sure she didn't try to escape. There were only a handful of people boarding the train on this day, many of which Rose recognized.

She received many strange looks from these people, but when Rose looked into one's eyes and opened her mouth as if to beg for help, Cal pushed her in front of him, ushering her into one of the cozy, first-class private booths.

He practically shoved her into the enclosed booth, slamming the door behind him and telling the steward that they did not wish to be disturbed.

Rose waited fearfully as Cal finally turned around to face her. She held her breath as she observed him collect his bearings. Finally, he turned to her, a forced calm settled over his expression as he regarded her; studied her up and down.

"My God, look at you, " he said almost gently, moving toward her with his arms outstretched.

Rose automatically shrank away from him.

Sensing this, Cal stopped, choosing instead to seat himself across from her. The expression of pain and hurt that registered in his eyes was obvious to anyone, but Rose felt not an ounce of guilt or pity--not after what he had done to Jack.

It did not take long for Cal's trained mask of hardness to settle back on his handsome features. "We have some matters to discuss," he said abruptly. "The first one being your embarrassing condition."

He said these words with obvious distaste, his lips forming around the syllables oddly as his eyes once again roamed to her still-flat belly.

Rose swallowed hard, eyes trained on the wall directly above Cal's head. "You're the only one whom seems to be embarrassed. I have no shame regarding my 'condition' as you put it."

There. She'd said it. Bold words. She knew Cal might strike her for it, but she was prepared.

But his face remained expressionless as he regarded her. Rose realized suddenly that he didn't know whether he should pity her or be angry with her. Finally, he made a decision. "Rose . . . sweetpea."

She turned her head in disgust. That he dared call her that stupid petname after all that had happened . . .

"Look at me, Rose. I know that you think that you loved Jack, but he is gone now. Your life must go on. I have everything you could ever need or want. I can take care of you."

She glared at him coldly. "You don't know me anymore, Cal. You can't possibly know what I want, but allow me to enlighten you. I want my freedom. I want my child--Jack's child. I want no part of you, ever. I don't care if I'm living in a box on the streets."

Cal opened his mouth to speak, but she continued before he could interrupt. "You tell me I need to get on with my life. What do you think I've been doing for the last two months? I've created a life for myself. MY OWN LIFE. A life where I'm not told how to live it. That was before you decided that you would simply barge in and lock me back up in my chains."

She stopped, suddenly, glaring at him. For once, Caledon Hockley was speechless. "You've given me another reason to hate you, and if you take my child away from me, I swear I will kill myself."

Her voice was barely audible as she said these words. They hung heavily in the audible silence of the booth. She made sure that he knew she meant every word of what she'd said. If she couldn't live up to her promise to Jack, then she would end it.

"Wouldn't that be embarrassing?" she whispered. "I can see the headlines now: 'Wife of millionaire Caledon Hockley takes own life.' It would be scandalous, don't you think so, darling?"

And as he looked into her eyes, he knew that she meant it.

Chapter 11 coming soon!

End  
file.